



Memorandum

July 2000

To: Interested Parties

From: Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Steering Committee

Subject: Description of Framework Alternatives and Supplemental Information for LCR MSCP Scoping Process

Public Scoping

The lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) is currently in the scoping phase of project development. The LCR MSCP is providing the following information and attached alternative framework descriptions for your information and assistance during this phase of project development. We encourage your participation in the process and will be evaluating all comments received during the scoping period. Public meetings will be held in late July and early August to seek public comments and suggestions on alternatives, issues, and concerns that should be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to be prepared on the LCR MSCP. The EIS is being prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the EIR will satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Supplemental Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS/EIR on the project was published in the Federal Register on July 12, 2000.

The dates and locations of the public scoping meetings, all of which will begin at 6:00 p.m., are:

- * July 31, at Yuma Desalting Plant, 7301 Calle Agua Salada, Yuma, AZ;
- * Aug. 1, at California Department of Fish and Game, 14700 S. Broadway, Blythe, CA;
- * Aug. 2, at Regional Government Center, 101 Civic Way, Laughlin, NV;
- * Aug. 3, at Henderson Convention Center, 200 South Water St., Henderson, NV.

A formal presentation of LCR MSCP alternatives currently under consideration will be presented at 6:30 p.m., at each of the scheduled meetings. These scoping meetings are supplemental to the initial scoping meetings held on the LCR MSCP during June-July 1999.

In addition to public comments at the meetings, individuals may also submit written comments on the alternatives and issues to be analyzed by the LCR MSCP. Written comments are requested by August 11, 2000; and they should be sent to Mr. Tom Shrader, Attn: LC-2011, Bureau of Reclamation, P.O. Box 61470, Boulder City, NV 89006-1470. Comments may also be faxed to Mr. Shrader at 702-293-8146.



Information on the program purpose, meetings, and documents is available electronically on the Internet at www.lcrmscp.org with a supplemental link to Reclamation's web page at www.lc.usbr.gov.

Program Overview and Alternatives under Consideration

The Lower Colorado River supplies vital water and power resources for more than 20 million people in Arizona, California, and Nevada. The River and its reservoirs are also principle resources for recreation in the area. In addition, the Colorado River is also important for the continued existence of species listed as threatened and endangered under the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts (ESA). A partnership of state, federal, tribal, and other public and private stakeholders has been formed to address the needs of environmental resources of the Lower Colorado River basin. The LCR MSCP is designed to serve as a coordinated, comprehensive wildlife and habitat conservation approach for the lower Colorado River basin within the historic floodplain of the Colorado River from below Glen Canyon Dam to the Southerly International Boundary with Mexico for a period of 50 years. Specifically, the purpose of the LCR MSCP is to:

- Conserve habitat and work toward recovery of included (covered) species within the historic floodplain of the Lower Colorado River, pursuant to the ESA, and attempt to reduce the likelihood of additional species listings under ESA;
- Accommodate current water diversions and power production and optimize opportunities for future water and power development, to the extent consistent with the law; and

- Provide the basis for incidental take authorizations pursuant to the federal ESA and California ESA.

Attached for your review and comment are summary descriptions of the four framework alternatives being considered for the LCR MSCP. Specifically these include:

- Alternative 1 - Habitat-based approach, habitat creation and restoration in large core areas with minimal management
- Alternative 2 - Habitat-based approach, with habitat creation and restoration in small core areas with an active management element
- Alternative 3 - Habitat-based approach emphasizing preservation and creation of habitat within the species' breeding ranges
- Alternative 4 - Species-based approach limited to Federally-listed threatened and endangered species and a small number of sensitive species

In addition, the No Action or No Project alternative will also be analyzed in the EIS/EIR as required by both NEPA and CEQA.